

One more day! Open goes to playoff

By Dennis O'Connor
staff writer

Arnold Palmer would be in London, England, right now. Billy Casper would be teaching 146 children at his golf camp in San Diego. And little-known Bob Stone would be back in his pro shop at the Crackerneck Golf Club in Independence, Mo.

Instead, these three golfers are back on the rolling fairways of Oakland Hills Country Club, playing in an 18-hole playoff to decide the championship of the second annual United States Senior Open.

The threesome, which was scheduled to tee off at 10 a.m. today, finished with identical 289 scores — nine shots over par on the 6,798-yard, par-70 championship South Course in Bloomfield Township.

There is \$45,172 of the \$150,000 prize money at stake in this playoff. The winner gets \$26,000, the runner-up grabs \$11,836 and the third-place finisher nets \$7,336.

A sudden-death playoff will start at hole No. 1 in case of a tie after the extra round. Admission is \$12 for the playoff round and parking is \$3 on the North Course across the street.

PALMER, CASPER and Art Wall, who finished fourth at 290, started Sunday's final round tied for first place at six over par. Stone was one shot back.

As it turned out, a two-over-par 72 would have won the tourney, but the slippery greens and tight fairways at Oakland Hills kept the contenders frustrated all day.

The 10,560 fans who turned out for Sunday's final round saw a thrilling finish.

Stone, 51, playing ahead of Casper and Palmer, bogeyed both the 17th and 18th hole to finish at 289. He three-putted both greens.



Billy Casper, 50, the youngest competitor at the Open, uses some body English on a putt.

Casper, 50, the youngest player in the 50-and-over event, parred the last three holes to finish at 289. He missed a 30-foot, birdie putt on the 18th that would have won the title. His putt slid five feet past the hole and he settled for par.

Palmer, 51, who shot a tournament-low 68 (two-under-par) on Saturday, had the best chance at winning the event.

Standing eight over par, Palmer hit a strong tee shot on 18, but followed it with a fat three-iron into the front bunker. He blasted out of the sand 10 feet from the pin, but missed the winning par putt.

"I'M A LITTLE disappointed that I didn't play the last hole well after my tee shot," said Palmer, whose plans to compete in this week's British Open were delayed one day.

"My putting was really poor. I had some wishy-washy putts. I felt after yesterday (Saturday) it would be better. I was leaving a lot of putts short. I just didn't have the zing in my putts that I had yesterday (Saturday)."

Casper, who defeated Palmer in a playoff to win the 1966 U.S. Open, was excited about a rematch with his rival 15 years later.

"It seems like we've gone through this before," the Springville, Utah, native said with a smile. "I feel very fortunate to be here. I didn't think 73 would be here."

Casper also seemed confident about his putting on the 18th green.

"I was going for it," Casper said of the 30-foot birdie attempt on the final hole. "I hit it a hair too far and it rolled to the left."

"I was looking at that five- or six-footer (for par), and I kept saying, 'Now take it easy. You've worked hard to get here.'"

"And after Arnold's shot (the missed 10-footer for par), I knew I had to get it, and I sunk it in the middle of the hole."

Stone is a relative unknown to the likes of a Palmer or a Casper. His biggest check on the tour is \$2,000. He was surprisingly calm about his 18-hole encounter with the two gallery favorites.

"Right now, it's just another day of golf," said Stone, who had to qualify for this event. "It'll be another battle tomorrow (Monday)."

"So far, I haven't been nervous. I probably will be more tomorrow, but they've (Palmer and Casper) got to get it in the hole just like me."

"I'm just as strong as they are."

OAKLAND HILLS and United States Golf Association (USGA) officials must be smiling about this second U.S. Senior Open. And television stations must be crying.

A total of 40,010 golf fans came to Bloomfield Township for the seven-day event which began Monday with the first of three practice rounds.

That's a far cry from the disaster at the Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaronek, N.Y., last year where the inaugural event drew slightly more than a 4,000-fan total. O' course, lowering the senior circuit age limit from 55 to 50 helped the popularity of the event.

ROBERT DE VICENZO, last year's champion, became ill and didn't come to Oakland Hills to defend his crown.

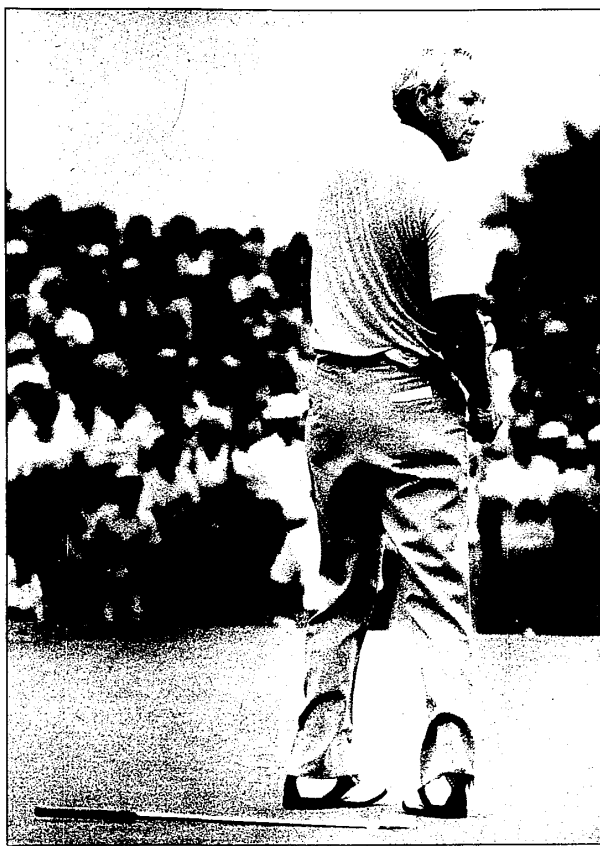
Wall, 57, the eighth-leading money winner in the senior tour, was tied with Casper, Palmer and Stone at seven-over-par after 15 holes. He earned \$8,736 fourth-place finish.

Gene Littler, the seniors' leading money winner with \$108,359, placed fifth at 292.

Miller Barber finished sixth (293), and Bob Goalby, who carved identical rounds of 71 to take the lead after two rounds, finished seventh at 294. Goalby led most of the third round until a double bogey on the par-three, 210-yard No. 9 and a triple bogey on long par-four, 448-yard No. 14 put him out of contention.

Mike Souchak, the host pro at Oakland Hills in the late 1960s, shot a final-round score of 69 — the only other sub-par round besides Palmer's fashionable 68 on Saturday.

"My total score of 154 (14-over-par) made the cut on Friday. Fifty of the 150-man field survived the cut — six were amateurs."



photos by JOHN STAND/staff photographer

Arnold Palmer looks in disbelief as his 10-foot putt misses the cup on the 18th green. The missed putt cost him the outright crown during regulation play. Palmer, 51, joins Billy Casper and little-known Bob Stone in an 18-hole playoff today. The three seniors

finished the four-round U.S. Senior Open with identical 289 scores — nine over par. The first-place prize-money in the \$150,000 tourney is \$26,000. More than 40,000 people visited Oakland Hills during the seven-day event.



Bob Stone, an obscure club pro from Missouri, battles the big boys — Arnold Palmer and Billy Casper — for the Open title.

Open stats

Here are the complete statistics for the top 50 golfers at the second annual \$150,000 United States Senior Open at the 6,798-yard, par-70 championship course at Oakland Hills Country Club in Bloomfield Township. The "a" denotes amateurs.

Billy Casper	73-72-71-73	289
Arnold Palmer	72-76-80-73	289
Bob Barber	71-72-74-72	289
Art Wall	71-72-73-74	290
Gene Littler	74-71-75-71	292
Miller Barber	74-71-74-74	293
Bob Goalby	71-71-76-76	294
Michael Fetschick	76-73-75-72	296
Lionel Hebert	76-77-74-75	296
Stan Thirk	74-77-75-71	296
Mike Souchak	75-74-78-69	296
Mac Main	76-75-71-74	298
George Bayer	73-70-77-80	300
Jim Fero	71-78-79-72	300
Billy Maxwell	76-75-75-74	300
Dow Finsterwald	81-73-74-73	301
Doug Higgins	74-78-72-76	301
a Glenn Johnson	77-77-72-75	301
Dick Sarta	73-75-75-78	301
Dan Sikes	78-74-70-78	301
Sam Stead	72-77-76-76	301
Gardner Dickinson	72-76-72-82	302
Stan Dudas	76-79-73-75	302
Freddie Haas	75-70-73-78	302
Howie Johnson	76-75-74-77	302
Dean Lind	76-74-76-76	302
Bill Ogden	79-75-76-73	303
Bob Ford	77-72-78-76	304
a James Jackson	73-79-73-79	304
Gordon Jones	74-78-74-78	304
Milos Marusic	77-73-76-78	304
Joe Cheves	75-74-77-79	305
Al Mengert	75-75-79-76	305
Tom Nieport	72-76-74-83	305
a William Campbell	73-78-77-78	306
a Allan Sussel	77-75-77-78	307
Ted Kroll	75-78-77-79	309
Joe Jimenez	76-77-78-79	310
Charles Owens	78-71-78-83	311
a Joe Simpson	78-75-82-75	310
Joseph Sodd	74-80-78-81	310
a Leo Kubiak	73-77-75-85	311
Harry Jacobs	72-78-79-83	312
George Thomas	77-77-72-86	312
George Butler	79-75-78-82	314
Bob Decker	75-70-83-77	314
B.G. Halbert	75-79-81-81	316
Richard Lotz	77-75-81-83	316
Ray Montgomery	75-78-80-84	317
Bob Rostburg	75-78-81	317

Golfers entertain appreciative gallery

By Doug Funke
staff writer

All of the competitors were at least 50 years of age, but that certainly didn't mean that the younger set was not interested in watching the exploits of some golfing greats out of the past.

"They came out Sunday — all 10,560 spectators, many of whom were much younger than the players — to cheer for Arnie."

"They also came to gawk at such notables as Billy Casper, Sam Snead and Gene Littler and, in some cases, just to enjoy an afternoon in the sun on one of the most beautiful golf courses in the United States."

They walked over the grounds with golf shoes, beat-up sneakers, fancy run-

ning shoes, sandals and bare feet.

Others didn't do much walking. They arrived early, picked out a spots like those under the willow trees on the picturesque 18th hole, and set up camp for the day.

"There appeared to be something for everyone."

Several young people, not even born when many of the tournament participants first started on the professional tour, perched on the roof of a shelter near the 18th green in an effort to better see the unfolding action.

A Frisbee was up there with them. There were all kinds of shouts of encouragement accompanied by applause and whistles.

"Come on Art (Wall). Run her in, buddy."

"Go get 'em, Arnie."

"Start your charge now, Miller (Barber)."

AT LEAST half of the gallery appeared to be in their 30s or younger.

"I attribute it to the fact that they love the game and some of the names they've heard about in history. I think that's part of it," said Al Mengert, host professional at Oakland Hills.

"It's a fact that there's no baseball on now and it's also a fact that maybe some parents want to bring their kids out. It's a beautiful pairing (Palmer and Casper) today, so some dads said 'you've got to come out and see these two guys,'" he said.

"I think Palmer is an outstanding draw. His name is so synonymous with golf," Mengert added.

"Palmer is a legend and Casper is a legend. I wish I could stroke the ball half as good as they do," said Gary Pike, a 25-year-old Detroit who served as a marshal during the tournament.

"When you get guys playing as well as they do as consistently, it's unreal."

Gerhard Sassenstein, a 26-year-old student at the University of Toledo, was writing a class paper on the tournament.

"I think they hit 'em pretty good," he said. "It's good golf — not bad at all. You can learn a lot watching these guys hit the ball."

Jim Gramann from Madison Heights who admittedly is more interested in tennis than golf, accompanied his father-in-law to the tournament. What most impressed the 28-year-old?

"The precision with which they're making shots. The skill is nice to watch," he said.

And so it went. The tremendous crowd crammed around the 18th green, straining for just a glimpse of the exciting finish.

Some started making a bee line to the first hole at the end, wrongly anticipating a sudden-death playoff.

Who said people would never be turned on by a golf tournament limited to men at least 50 years of age?

Host pro smiles

Al Mengert, head professional at Oakland Hills Country Club, accomplished two of the four goals he set for himself prior to the U.S. Senior Open.

"I wanted to first qualify, second make the cut, third break 300 and fourth hopefully get in the top 10," he said.

The personable Birmingham resident made good on the first half of his plan of action. However, with rounds of 75, 75, 79 and a closing 76 Sunday, he came in at 305, which was good enough only for a tie for 32nd place.

Mengert said that his major problems originated with his driver. He said that he missed the fairway on 28 of the 56 holes where he used the driver from the tee.

Mengert also said that his lack of tournament competition in the past eight months also hampered his confidence, which subsequently hurt his game.

Mike Souchak, head pro at Oakland Hills from 1987 through 1972, didn't do all that badly on his old stomping grounds. He finished 11th overall. His round of 69 Sunday was the only other round under par during the entire tournament other than the 68 carded by Palmer Saturday.

George Bayer, the pro at the Detroit Golf Club, was in second place midway through the tournament, but finished 13th with a score of 300.

G. Peter Smith from Birmingham, John Williams of Orchard Lake, and Tom Rex of Franklin Village, all failed to survive the cut after 36 holes.



Most of the Sunday crowd jammed around the 18th green to see the exciting finish.